

LIVINGSTON VETERINARY HOSPITAL

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EXHIBIT 2
DATE 1/27/09
HB 2



Dr. Jeffrey R. Dickerson, DVM
Dr. Lindsey Ehlers, DVM

January 23, 2009

TO: Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government
FR: Dr. Jeff Dickerson, Owner
Livingston Veterinary Hospital
RE: Incumbent Worker Training Grant Funds

I write this letter to the subcommittee asking for continued funding of the IWTG program for small businesses in Montana. My veterinary business employs 7-9 people and has participated in the successful IWTG pilot program. This pilot program has already helped us train and retain present employees through improving their skills which in turn increases their job satisfaction and loyalty to our business. Additionally, this is increasing the business' ability to be profitable by increased use of specialized equipment and hospital space, and improved employee efficiency. And, this allows our business to improve our contributions to our community by providing higher paying jobs and higher levels of local spending by employees, supporting community volunteering of employees and paying higher taxes because of investing in improved, high value business equipment, higher employee payroll taxes and higher business taxes.

This type of support and funding for small businesses from our state is very critical to our viability, but we have not previously had the advantages of state support. Such support is often more available to larger businesses that are given tax breaks of many types, and more access to employee training programs because of their large human resource staffs and administrative employees that can write grants and lobby for tax incentives. Yet small businesses like mine continue to grow in employee number and wages paid and in business real estate size and equipment, thus increasing the tax dollars paid by small businesses. In small businesses there is not often enough money to provide the level of specialized training to stay competitive and profitable while meeting the ever increasing employee retention demands such as the medical insurance we have provided for years. In today's economic pressures, this program will and has helped my employees have increased job satisfaction, increase the services we can offer patients and improve our business profits. As an example, my associate veterinarian recently attended a dental treatment and surgery training offered only out-of-state. This immediately increased her ability to discuss and educate pet owners about the critical need and value of such care to the patients, while also giving her the skill base to do the technical treatments and surgeries. In the two months immediately following completion of her training, 25% and 14% more patients respectively are having these procedures done. This improvement is a direct result of the IWTG pilot program and further proving that good medical care results in good business and strong communities.

I would highly recommend continued support for the program so small business in Montana can:

- Improve employee skill and job satisfaction resulting in business loyalty and employment retention.
- Continue answering to the increasing needs of our customers, again resulting in higher levels of job satisfaction, etc.
- Provide better opportunities for profitability while returning valuable community support through employee spending and higher business related taxes.

Thank you for supporting small businesses and communities in Montana.